

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

FEBRUARY 2001

ONE DOLLAR





Director's Column

William L. Woodfin, Jr

With spring right around the corner, it's time to dust off your rods and reels, clean out that boat, grab your map, and begin to plan for another great year of fishing and boating. At the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, we are busily preparing for an exciting new year of opportunities, and we always look forward to being a part of your outdoor experiences. Beginning with this issue of *Virginia Wildlife*, and running for the next 10 months, we'll be featuring a series of guides promoting public lakes throughout Virginia. Each month we will highlight a region of the state, showcasing the many facilities and services available to the citizens of the Commonwealth.

We are very pleased that the work we do in managing public boat landings and the Commonwealth's fisheries resources and aquatic habitat has earned national recognition for the Department. And the credit has to be given to our staff; hard-working people like Regional Fisheries Manager, Larry Mohn who received the Southeastern Fisheries Biologist-of-the-Year Award, given by the Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies at their annual conference. In his 25-year career with VDGIF, Larry has been responsible for overseeing Virginia's trout program, and he was recognized for initiating the Virginia Trout Stream and Environmental Inventory that identified and classified over



Right to left: Steve Kesler, Boating Access Program Manager, was recognized by the States Organization for Boating Access; William L. Woodfin Jr., Director of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and Larry Mohn, Regional Fisheries Manager, recipient of the Southeastern Fisheries Biologist-of-the-Year Award.

2,000 miles of wild trout waters in the Commonwealth. He has initiated and supported unique recreational angling opportunities through the development of numerous special regulation trout areas.

With the increasing popularity of boating and the demand for quality boating access, the Department has been hard at work improving the waterways of Virginia for all boaters and anglers. One of the key people in our boating access work is Steve Kesler, who was recognized by the States Organization for Boating Access for his efforts in maintaining and improving the quality of boat landings across the Commonwealth. He developed a maintenance management plan for our 227 boat landings that resulted in significant savings and improvements.

Boating and aquatic education, angler recognition programs, and a wealth of published guides are just a few ways the Department enhances your outdoor experience every day of the year. With high-caliber, trained professionals we are committed to serve you. So, before you head out on that next fishing trip or a day of boating on one of the many rivers or lakes in Virginia, let us be your guide to having a safe and fun time.

If you would like a copy of the Department's new *2001 Freshwater Fishing Regulations* or *Freshwater Fishing Guide*, please write us at: Information Office, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, P.O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230-1104 or call (804) 367-9369.

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Has your hunting season just ended or is it just beginning? The answer can be found on page nine in "A Sure Cure for Cabin Fever."

VIRGINIA WILDLIFE

Cover: Little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*) ©Joe McDonald.
Back cover: Red-bellied woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*)
by Spike Knuth.

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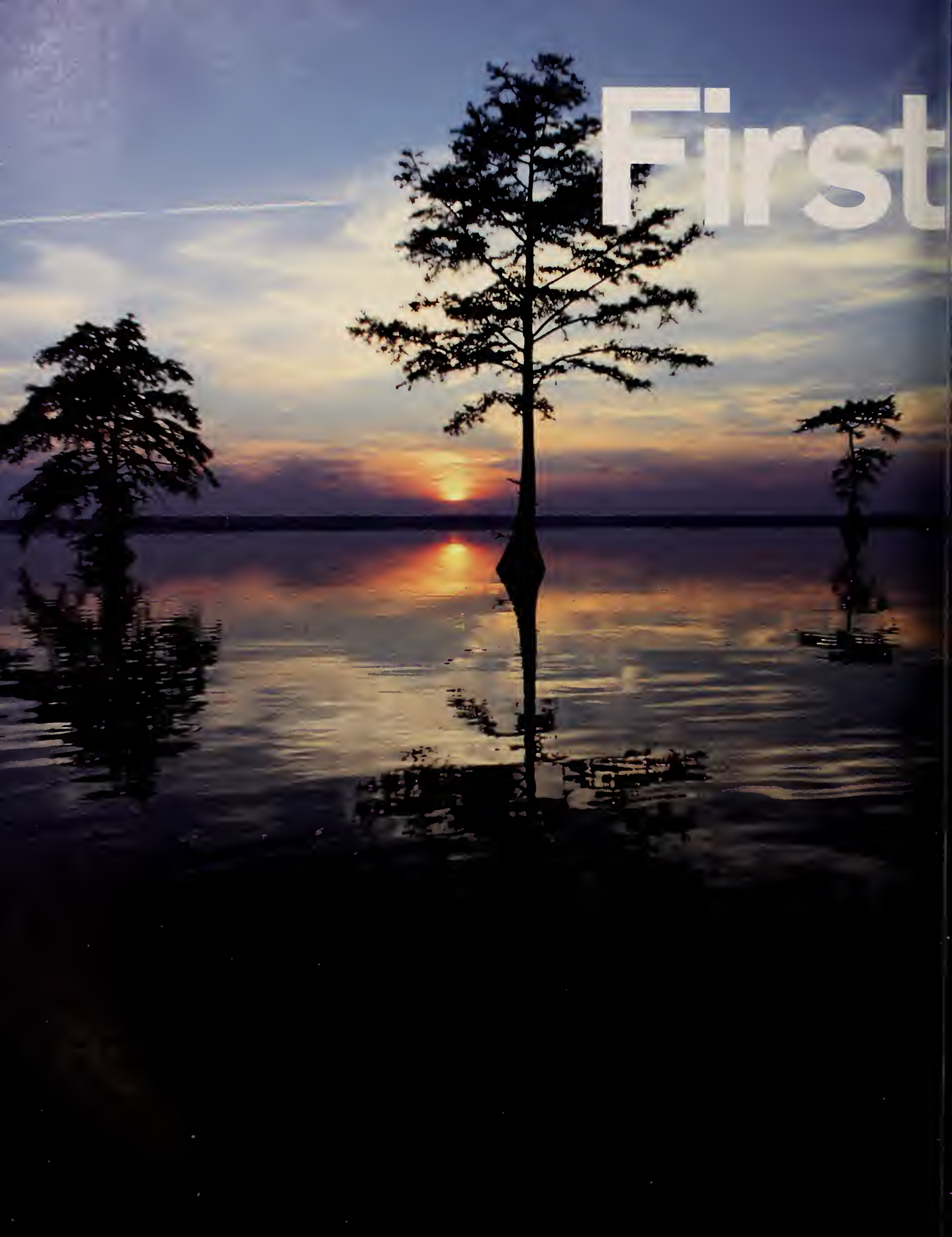
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Dedicated to the Conservation of Virginia's Wildlife and Natural Resources

First



Impression

story and photos by Tim Wright

For canoeing and camping enthusiasts, the Great Dismal Swamp is anything but dismal.

The campground at the end of the Feeder Ditch is on a short spit of land so narrow that it can be spanned by three or four tents pitched end to end. As evening falls, we retreat to the screened pavilion that dominates the campground and provides shelter from the brutality of the night when mosquitoes are thick in the air. Mosquitoes are one reason we decided to make the five mile long paddle from Rt. 460 to the heart of the Great Dismal Swamp early in

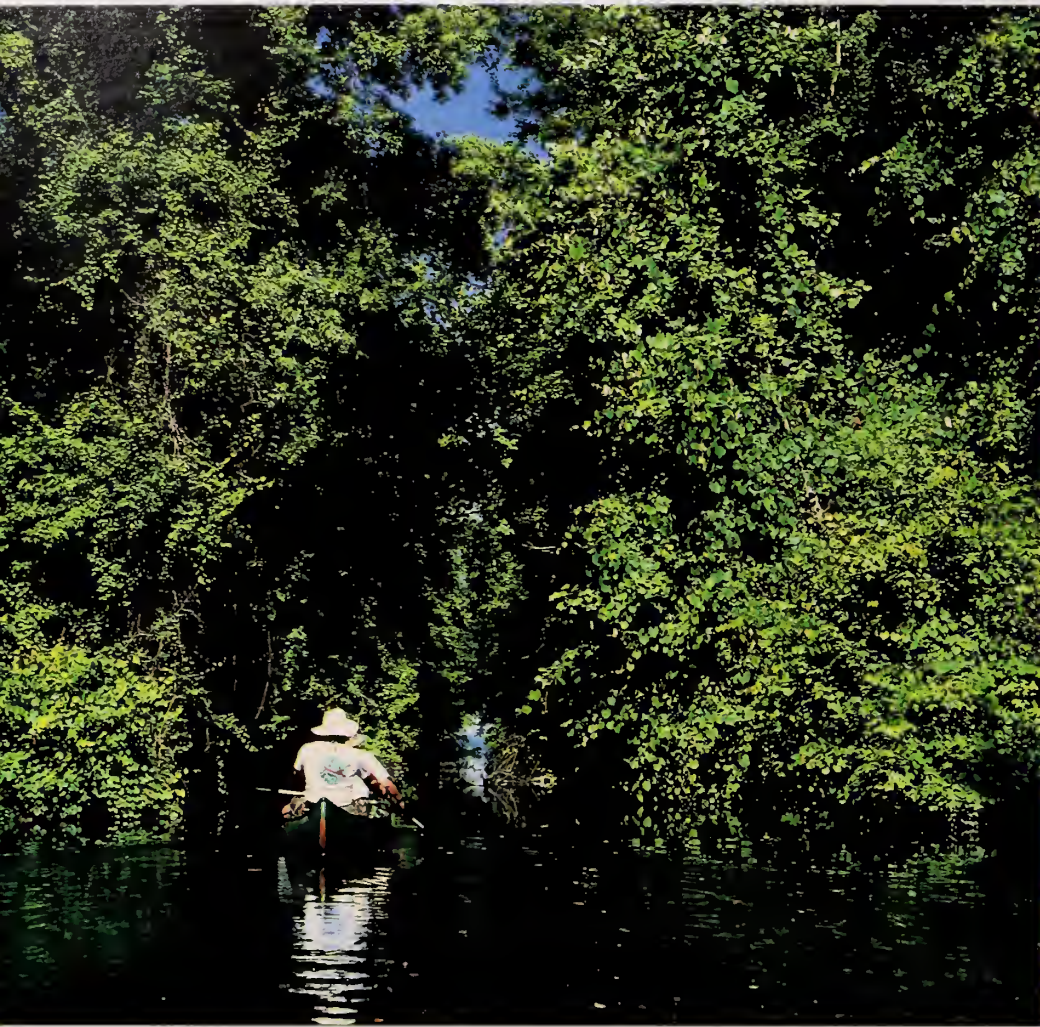
the spring, before exploding hordes of the flying parasitic insects make the journey a miserable experience.

Shortly after arriving in mid-afternoon, a plan comes to mind. Lake Drummond lies less than a mile away and we're lucky to have clear skies. The openness of the lake and the darkness of the swamp is bound to present an ideal arena for stargazing. This is my first journey into the Great Dismal Swamp and I want it to be memorable. Drifting beneath the stars will accomplish that goal.

With the chores of setting up camp finished, I'm eager for my first glimpse of Lake Drummond, and I set out for a look around. The lake is so smooth it reflects isolated cypress trees with the perfection of a mirror. The tannins in the water give the lake a brown cast and it strikes me that my paddle is disappearing into a vast pool of clean motor oil. Accordingly, the oil-like droplets seem to slide off my paddle and fall onto the lake with the barest ripple. When the afternoon sun sinks to just above the tree line, the water turns to gold and the sky takes on a magenta hue. It's the kind of moment that makes one want to linger and drink in every possible moment of time. However, the dinner fires are already burning and, with darkness coming quickly, it's time to head back to camp.

Stands of bald cypress trees line Lake Drummond, which is located in the middle of the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. This 3,100-acre body of water is one of only two natural lakes in Virginia, and it is a major attraction for boaters who enjoy paddling through its dark, tannin stained waters.





It's a quarter to half mile back to the campground along an arrow-straight, narrow channel, where trees bend down to kiss the brown water or reach high into the clear sky. Along the way, you find yourself paddling beneath the occasional fallen tree that has become a kingfisher's perch and a black snake's lair.

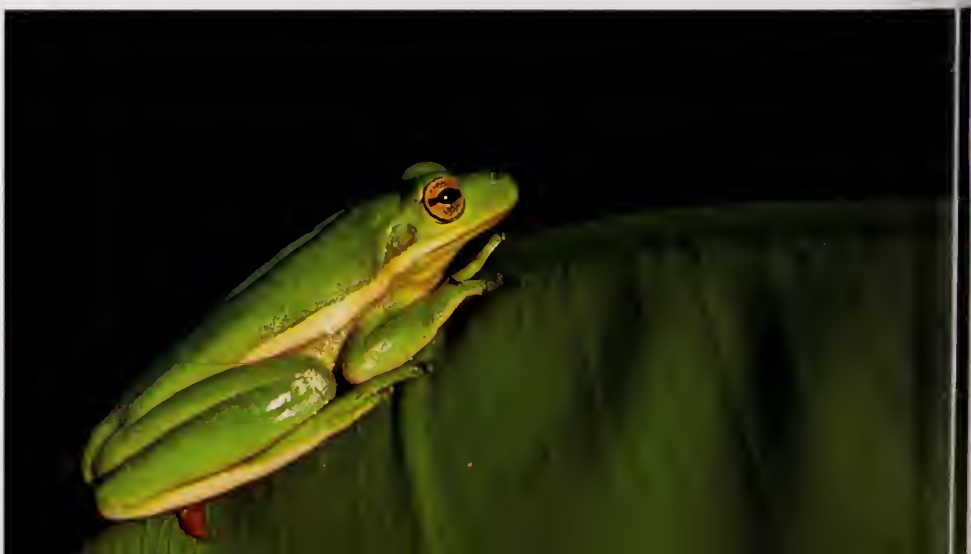
As the darkness gathers, the night comes alive with the sounds of frogs and the nocturnal creatures of the Great Dismal. I sit in the pavilion eating dinner, listening, and staring off into the blackness that lay outside the curtain of screen mesh. When a companion shatters my serenity by pulling out an AM radio to catch his favorite talk show, and then his cell phone to chat with friends, my patience wears thin.

Anxious to escape, I ask Ron Asher if he's interested in paddling out to the lake to see the stars.

A few moments later I'm settling into the bow of a canoe as Ron, who is much larger than I, takes the stern. As the bowman, it's my responsibility to choose the course because, in theory, I have the best view of what's ahead.



*A primitive campground is located along the Feeder Ditch that leads paddlers to Lake Drummond. Dense vegetation and a vast array of animals, like green treefrogs (*Hyla cinerea*) below, opossums (*Didelphis virginiana*) right, and black bears (*Ursus americanus*) page 8, create a wildlife watching bonanza for visitors.*

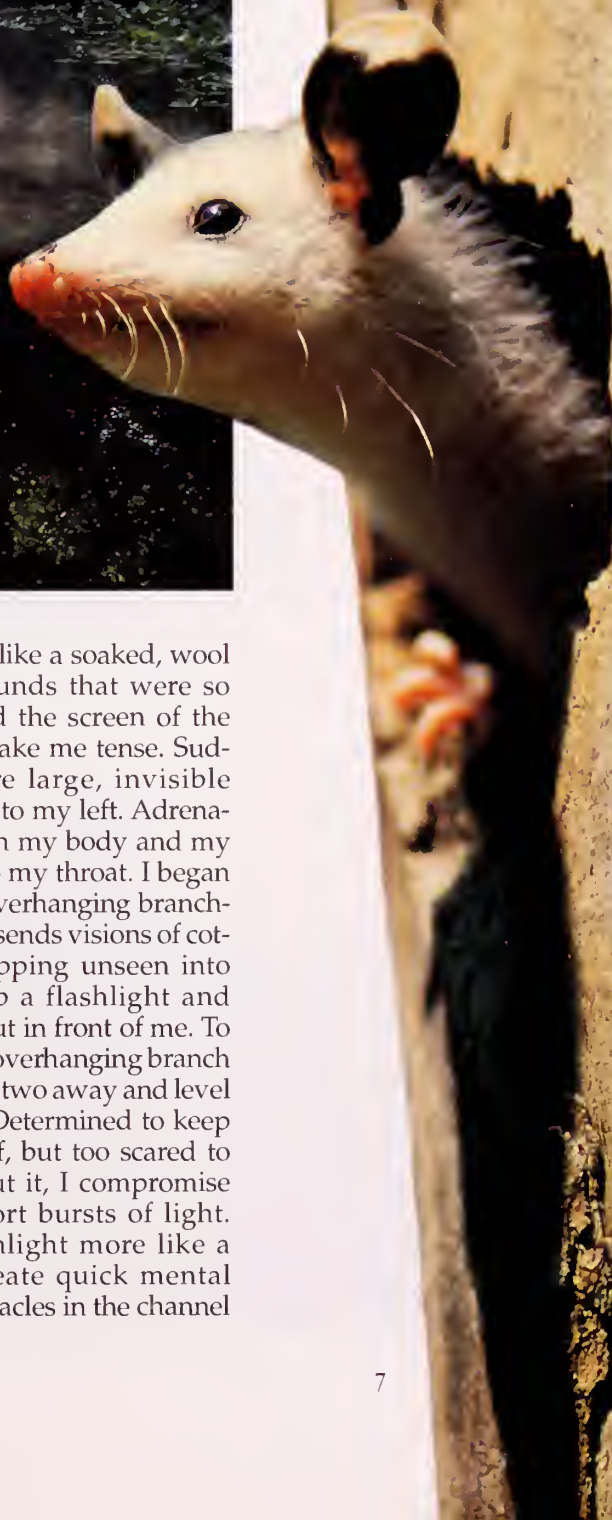




For as long as I can remember, I've preferred night hikes without a flashlight. I always found the narrow cone of light to be more of a hindrance than help because it robs me of adaptive vision and an overall sense of my surroundings. Since the earlier trip out to the lake had been a short, easy paddle I thought we could make do without battery induced vision. But with the night, a darkness heavier than I had expected has fallen among the trees. My eyes, even when fully adapted, can't see the channel or even my own outstretched hand. Only by looking straight up, at a line of faint star glow where the trees don't quite meet, can I even begin to guess where the channel lies.

What was a fun idea grows into a personal test of nerve. With the

darkness heavy like a soaked, wool blanket, the sounds that were so soothing behind the screen of the pavilion now make me tense. Suddenly, there are large, invisible splashes just off to my left. Adrenaline jolts through my body and my heart jumps into my throat. I began to think of the overhanging branches and paranoia sends visions of cottonmouths dropping unseen into the boat. I grab a flashlight and throw a beam out in front of me. To my surprise, an overhanging branch is a mere yard or two away and level with my head. Determined to keep the flashlight off, but too scared to press on without it, I compromise with quick, short bursts of light. Using the flashlight more like a flashbulb, I create quick mental maps of the obstacles in the channel



and then maneuver us by the sliver of starlight overhead.

Like a train coming out of a tunnel, a growing glow in front of us gradually reveals the lake beyond. Breaking out of the trees, the sky opens up like an ocean. Overhead the Milky Way, a huge glowing brushstroke against a black background, stretches across the circular lake. The sky is a twinkling bowl of stars, planets, and highflying aircraft. Not even a breath of air is moving and the lake can't be smoother than it is at this moment.

As we move out into the lake, the channel to the campground disappears among the shadows behind us. A sense of unease overcomes me about losing our way back, and I question aloud the wisdom of venturing far. Pausing with his paddle in hand, Ron looks back over his shoulder towards the channel. He's a bear of a man with a soul more gentle than a summer breeze, and he's spent much of his life hiking, camping and canoeing across the Old Dominion. With a calm so true

to his nature, he points out a combination of stars and tree silhouettes and says that we'll use them to find our way back.

Watching the water as I paddle, I'm struck by tiny pinpricks of light that are visible the instant before my paddle shatters the surface calm. It takes me a few moments to realize that what I am seeing are the reflection of stars in the water. To test my theory, I glance forward and watch as more pinpoints gracefully ride up and down the smooth bow wave of our canoe.

For a while we make our way towards the middle of the three-mile wide lake. Eventually we stop paddling and let the flat-bottom canoe choose its course. With its unsteady nature, we begin a slow pirouette beneath the stars. We each retreat into our thoughts and in the silence watch as falling stars arch across the heavens. □

Tim Wright is an award-winning photojournalist who lives in Richmond, Virginia. His photographs have appeared nationally and throughout the world.



The Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge encompasses more than 100,000 acres, and it is located in the far southeastern corner of Virginia, bordering the counties of Suffolk and Chesapeake. The Refuge is home to a vast array of flora and fauna, including hundreds of species of wildlife and birds. Black bears, endangered eastern canebrake rattlesnakes, and 3,100-acre Lake Drummond, which by the way is one of only two natural lakes in the state, help make this one of the most unique places in Virginia.

For additional information about the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge call (757) 986-3705.



A Sure Cure For Cabin Fever





Expand your hunting season for deer this year with a post-season scouting trip and “shed” those winter blues.

by Denny Quaiff

When the first Saturday in January rolls around, most Old Dominion deer hunters put away their bows and guns after three long months of hunting. Many of these folks have decided that it is time for a well-deserved break during the cold winter months that lie ahead. However, for those of us who are obsessed with outsmarting that elusive whitetail buck that evaded our every move over the past season, it's a perfect time to try and figure out a new game plan. It would be safe to say that post-season scouting will get you headed in the right direction.

My first real, post-season scouting trip took place more than 12 years ago. Before this point in time I had basically been a member of the “take it easy club.” Spending most of my spare time indoors watching football and basketball while waiting for spring gobbler season to open. This was a self-taught course, and I was not real sure just what I had mastered with this new challenge. I must have learned something from my outings, for I was rewarded with an outstanding 11-point buck in November of that year, while hunting one of my favorite areas

where the old boy had left his mark.

Since that memorable day I have become an advocate of post-season scouting. The more time I spent in the woods after deer season ends, the more positive I feel about my opportunity for success on opening day. Avid deer hunters agree that the information gathered in the post-season will provide priceless knowledge in the fall.

Getting Started

Like many successful whitetail hunters before me, much of my good fortune over the years has come from trial and error. After that first year of stumbling around in the woods with little understanding of what I was doing, I learned this practice would prove to be my future “ace in the hole” and I developed a scouting plan.

In order to keep from wasting a lot of valuable time, start with a pencil and paper making notes of the areas to be scouted. Use the information obtained from the previous season and spend your time wisely. Even though you may end up covering the majority of your hunting property, it is always wise to have a place to start.

Several years ago I started using aerial photographs of my hunt club property, which were taken during the winter months when the leaves were off the trees. This provided an all-new look to the land that I had walked over many times before. The photos pointed out deer hot spots that I never knew existed. I have since found these photos to be helpful to establish new stand locations. The photos provided a clear picture of narrow stretches of elevated ground going through or around swamps and low lying marshy areas where deer often seek refuge. The photos also pointed out large timber stands extending into open or cutover land. These travel corridors are what I refer to as natural funnels and edges. There are private firms you

can contract to do the photography or contact your local U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency for a photocopy of your property.

Search Out the Food Sources

Most of the whitetails that I have hunted over the past 42 years have been big-woods deer. Hunters that hunt farmland whitetails can usually figure out what crops the deer will be using throughout the season. It takes a little more study of your hunting area when focusing on deer that primarily rely on Mother Nature for their groceries. Regardless of whether you are after farmland or big-woods deer, knowing what and where deer will be feeding next year will jump-start your chances to put venison in the freezer. Look for the best acorn producing oaks in your hunting territory. Deer feed on acorns when they are available and should be considered a preferred food source. If you have been seeing deer in the fields during early fall and they all of a sudden seem to vanish, check out those oak stands of timber that you found on your post-season scouting trips. There is a good chance you will find some of those deer grazing on the hardwood mast.

Although deer love acorns, vast open areas of clear-cuts will create tender browse foods where the loggers have been. Finding these logged-over areas requires little effort and can easily be accomplished by driving around your property looking for logging operations. Some of the best bucks I have taken came off clear-cuts that were scouted during the post-season. Look for the cutover land to provide the food sources after the farmland crops have been harvested and the fallen acorns have been eaten.

Looking For Signs

Once the season is over and



©Denny Quaiff

Deer hunters who discover large rubs during the post-season can rest assured that they are in buck country. While spring gobbler hunting, the author and Blake Shelby, publisher of Peterson's Hunting Magazine, examine a sizable rub made during the previous hunting season.

things start settling down from constant hunting pressure, deer will slowly get back into their regular routine. During this time you can scout a deer much closer to his bedroom and not worry about messing up your chances of hunting that same animal next fall.

This is the only time of the year when it is worth the risk of scouting a mature buck's bedding area. Even if you jump an old buck, it's a long time until next year's deer season and the chance of him remembering that close encounter is very unlikely.

In order to find a big buck's haven, you must explore patches of thick and remote areas of cover that veteran hunters would never invade during the hunting season. When you discover a mature buck's sanctuary expect to find big tracks leading in and out of the thicket. This area should have an abundance of droppings with numerous bedding sights and antler rubs. The signs that you find in these remote hideaways will be a dead giveaway to where he has been living. And



©Bill Lea

Each year, during late winter and early spring, male white-tailed deer cast their antlers.



©Bill Lea



©Bill Lea

who knows, you might get lucky and catch a quick glimpse of the old boy when he jumps from his secure hideout.

Having knowledge of where a mature buck has spent the past hunting season is valuable information. Now is the time to try and decide where you can best hunt the animal next year. Look for stand placements in the off-season so the deer will have no cause for alarm when hunting season opens. Always remember you will be hunting the buck on the outskirts of his bedding area; that will put you in the heart of his living room.

Picking Up Shed Antlers

During the 1998 hunting season, while making a man drive, I pushed a very wide and massive antlered buck out of his bed on my hunt club lease. After the deer season closed, a group of rabbit hunters were hunting in the same area of the property and discovered a very large shed antler. About ten months later, during the early muzzleloading season, I harvested the buck that dropped

that shed. I downed the six and a half year old animal on what I believe to be the same trail where the shed antler was found.

Whitetail bucks start dropping their headgear in late December and this will continue throughout the winter. There are a number of factors that determine when bucks cast their antlers. Some of these include the deer's age and health. Other elements involve the weather conditions, length of daylight hours, and the buck's hormone levels. While quail hunting back in the early 80s on the last day of the February season I recall jumping a bachelor group of five big bucks in a clear-cut. All five animals were still carrying their antler racks.

The whitetail buck casts his antlers every year of his adult life. Since this is a biological fact, why are so few found? Again there is a number of determining factors, but the main reason is they are eaten. Mice, squirrels, chipmunks, and a host of other forest creatures consume antlers for the high levels of calcium and phosphorus they contain.

There is a very narrow window of opportunity for picking up sheds. I have found the last of February and



the month of March to be the best time to find shed antlers. Again you need a plan of direction before you start to look. Most sheds I have found over the years were in and around bedding areas, buck trails, fence crossings, and food plots. Several years ago I remember showing one of my hunting buddies a huge rub on a cedar tree I had discovered during the deer season and lying right at the base of the cedar was a 4-point shed antler. Another source of information, when it comes to sheds, is your neighboring farmer. After a scouting trip this past winter I was talking with the farmer whose property joins our hunting lease. During our conversation, I managed to find out he had found a large shed in his pasture while feeding hay to his cattle. There were some big buck signs found in late November and early December along our property lines that joins the farmers' fields. This information not only proved to me that the buck was alive, but it will also help my confidence level next year while hunting in that section of the property.

Anyway you look at it, collecting shed antlers in the deer woods after the hunting season ends is another

fulfilling experience for the whitetail enthusiast. If you have never been shed hunting, you need to give it a shot.

Conclusion

Post-season scouting trips during the late winter and early spring months have been a great form of mental therapy for this former member of "the take it easy club." My post-season outings have simply expanded my hunting season. As a result of this practice, I have become a more satisfied and competent whitetail hunter. Let me encourage each of you to take advantage of what Mother Nature has to offer. Spend some of your spare time in late winter and early spring enjoying the out-of-doors while looking for last year's deer signs and shed antlers. This well-kept secret has proven to be a sure-fired remedy for even the most severe case of cabin fever. □

Denny Quaiff is an avid hunter and is the senior editor of Whitetail Times, the official magazine of the Virginia Deer Hunters Association. For more information on the Association, write Virginia Deer Hunters Association, Inc., P.O. Box 34746, Richmond, Virginia 23234-0746 or check the VDHA Web site at: www.virginiadeerhunters.org.

Post-season scouting trips can be rewarding in many ways. Here the author is pictured with an outstanding buck taken during the 1999 hunting season. He contributes his success to post-season scouting trips.



Lee Walker



©Bill Lea



*As a few lucky anglers can
attest, the success of
Virginia's landlocked striped bass
fisheries has become more than just a*

big fish tale

by Bill Cochran

Most good fishermen don't know when to quit. On occasion, that trait will get their name etched in the Virginia record book. It did for James B. Davis.

Tenacity isn't the only factor in the record setting process. There is skill and luck, and maybe even a tad bit of magic, too. Who knows? It doesn't happen often enough to draw many conclusions.

Virginia's landlocked striped bass record, on the average, stands just over two years before someone totes home a fish big enough to rewrite the record book. Most often the fish has been wrestled from 20,000-acre Smith Mountain Lake, located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge.

So, right off, Davis—his friends



James B. Davis (left) and his fishing partner Gerald Dillon (right), both from Bedford County, show off the new state record landlocked striped bass, weighing a whopping 53 pounds, 7 ounces. Davis hooked the big fish last March on Leesville Lake.

One for

call him JB—was in the wrong place. He and his fishing partner, Gerald Dillon, both from Bedford County, were casting to Leesville Reservoir. They weren't even after striped bass last March, the day Davis landed a 53-pound, 7-ounce state record. More about that later; first, let's talk about Leesville.

For better than 30 years, Leesville has taken a back seat to its popular upstream brother, Smith Mountain. It is a runt in comparison, 3,400 acres vs. 20,000 acres. It is remote to the point that a long, winding haul through rural pine and tobacco country is required to reach a launching ramp. Leesville's purpose in life is to collect and hold water to be pumped back to Smith Mountain. That means its level can go up and down daily, like a window shade, while Smith Mountain fluctuates little. When the turbines are reversed at Smith Mountain Dam, the water of Leesville moves, as if stirred by some strong, mysterious inland tide. It can collect heaps of debris and gives an angler a queasy feeling when his boat suddenly begins to drift upstream.

Davis likes Leesville just the way it is, warts and all. He enjoys the remoteness, the solitude, and the grab-bag variety of fish that it offers.

"We went on a tip I got in the barber shop," said Dillon. "It said walleyes were running Pigg River."

Pigg River, named after a family that settled in the region, is a major

tributary of Leesville. It feeds into the upper end of the narrow, snake-shaped impoundment. About 9:30 a.m. on March 16, 2000, Davis and Dillon launched into Leesville at the VDGF Pittsville Ramp. The ramp parking lot was empty. Davis steered his 14-foot, jet-powered johnboat into the Pigg River. It was raining.

"We fished basically white bass and walleye, largemouth and smallmouth bass," said Davis.

The two anglers caught a pound-size redeye and a couple of large-mouth in the 2-pound class, and they released some smallmouth bass. Davis was grinning. It was his kind of day.

"I fish for all fish," he said. "I am just as happy catching bluegills, crappie or redeye."



©Dwight Dyke

Trolling, casting artificial lures, and fishing with live bait are proven striper-catching methods on Smith Mountain and Leesville lakes.

But after three hours in the rain, and no walleyes showing an interest, they headed out of the river and back into Leesville to a spot where Davis had caught stripers in the past. It was a deep hole against a rock outcropping with a cove nearby.

At that time, the state record striped bass was a 49-pound, 4-ounce catch landed by Keith Burgess, of Stockdale, N.C. It was taken April 10, 1999, from where else?—Smith Mountain Lake. So had every other record landed the past 15 years. If you chart the catches on a map you will see that all sections of the lake have produced

More Cast the Record



David Kirk from Vinton, Va., used a live gizzard shad to land this trophy striped bass.

As with any really big fish there's always a "big" fish tale to go along with it. Here are just a few of the actual stories behind the anglers who have been lucky enough to land some of Virginia's record book, landlocked striped bass.

40 pounds, 10 ounces
December, 1985
Smith Mountain Lake
David Kirk, Vinton, Va.

While fishing in the rain with two family members, David Kirk saw what appeared to be a big striper flash on the screen of his locator in the upper Roanoke River arm of Smith Mountain Lake. Kirk stopped and put down one of the large gizzard shads he had netted earlier for bait.

continued on page 21

records. But knowledgeable fishermen also have been aware that Leesville holds giant stripers. In fact, 30-pounders have been caught in Leesville and passed off as Smith Mountain fish by anglers who desire to keep Leesville to themselves. Davis knew that.

"I had one rod rigged for stripers," he said. "I told Gerald, 'This is it. I'm not even going to put the trolling motor down.'"

It was a last gasp effort, one of those, "Let's make one more cast then head home for a hot shower and dry clothes." Dillon was ready.

"We'd already bailed water out of the boat once," he said.

Of course, an angler can't make one last cast anymore than a kid can eat a single potato chip. Davis made five or six casts, combing the water with a red-and-white, quarter-ounce Bomber Long A plug.

"I heard his drag strip," Dillon said. "When he set the hook the water boiled."

The fish took what Davis called "a screaming run," that ripped 100 yards or so of 17-pound line from his spinning reel. "It nearly cleaned it," said Davis.

Dillon guessed the fish to be at least 30 pounds, but when it rolled to the surface about 50 feet away he upped his estimate to 50 pounds. Striper fishermen have talked about breaking the 50-pound barrier for years. Keith Burgess came close with his massive 49-pound, 4-ounce catch. No doubt there have been fishermen who have hooked a 50-pounder and were unable to hold on. Some have docked with tales of straightened hooks, of heavy boats being towed toward deep water, of lines cracking with the sound of a .22 rifle, of not exactly being in control.

Davis was able to turn the fish when it headed toward the cove. "He came back out and started sounding deep," Davis said. "I was afraid of a tree, naturally. He didn't find one. Then I pumped the fish back slow and easy."

Dillon readied the net, which was way too small for the task being as-

signed it. A landing net that is adequate at the beginning of a fishing trip suddenly can appear to be anemic when you have a record fish hooked. Dillon jabbed the net over the snout of the fish and used both hands to help Davis heave it aboard. The battle had lasted 15 minutes.

"When we got that fish into the boat he (it actually was a she) was totally worn out," said Davis. "He never flopped. He put everything he had into it."

It measured 46 $\frac{3}{4}$ -inches. Its olive-colored back and black horizontal stripes faded to a pot-bellied underside that was the color of drifting snow. More than two decades earlier, its Kerr Lake parents likely had bullied their way up the Roanoke (Staunton) River bearing a heavy cargo of eggs to spawn. They had been captured by workers at the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, Vic Thomas Striped Bass Hatchery, and a single fertilized egg, one of millions, had grown into a fingerling that was released in Leesville. The rest is history.

Dillon gazed at the listless fish in the bottom of the boat. "This is a record!" he said. Davis wasn't so certain. He figured it would be in the 40-pound class.

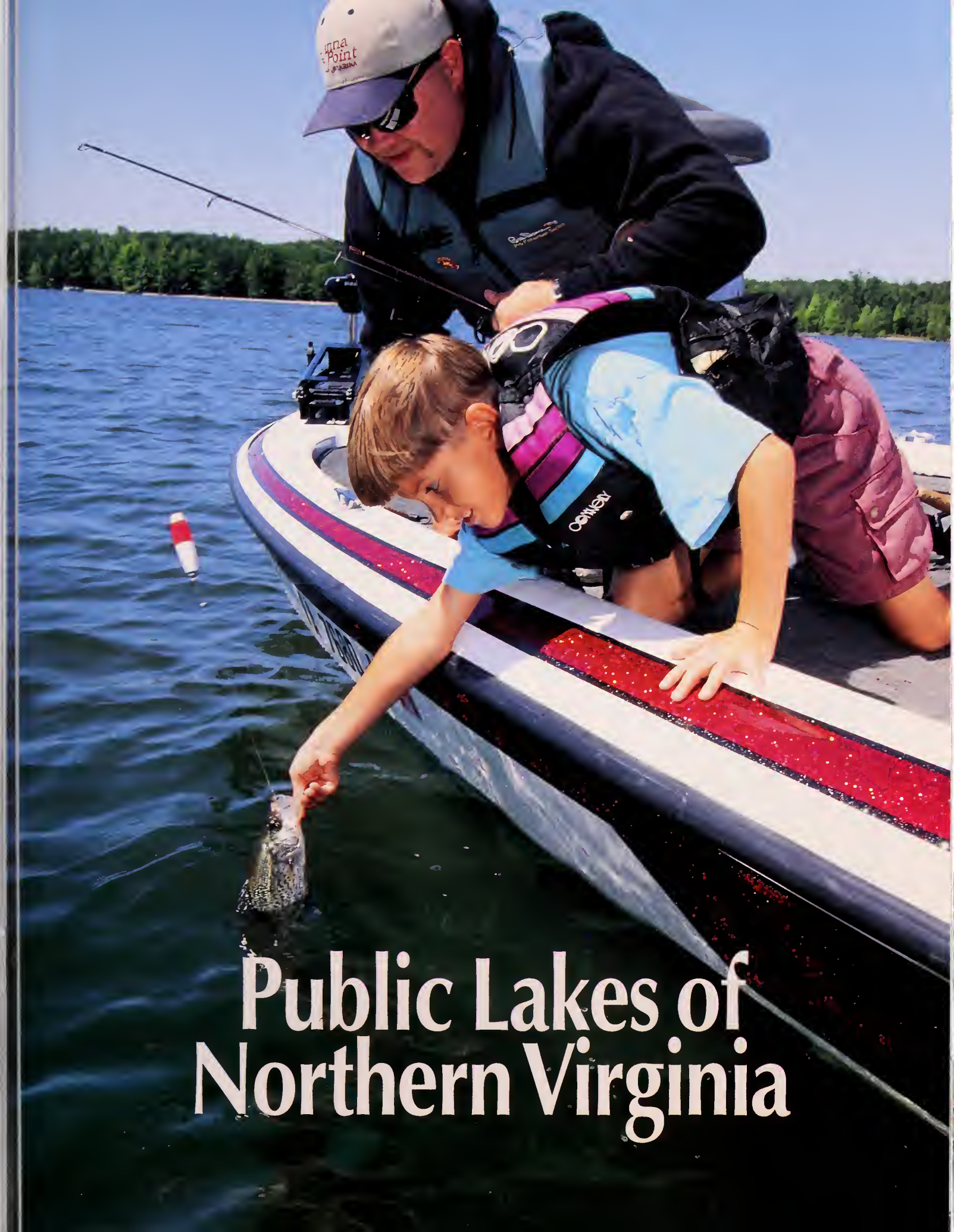
"I had carried a lot of 50-pound bags of cracked corn," said Dillon. "This fish weighs more than 50 pounds. Let's go," he urged.

The two anglers called ahead to Campers Paradise, a marina on Smith Mountain Lake where there are certified scales big enough to weigh a record. The marina alerted a game warden to verify the weight. When Davis and Dillon reached the facility a crowd had gathered, including several guides who wanted to know where the fish had been caught.

"Not on this lake," Davis told them.

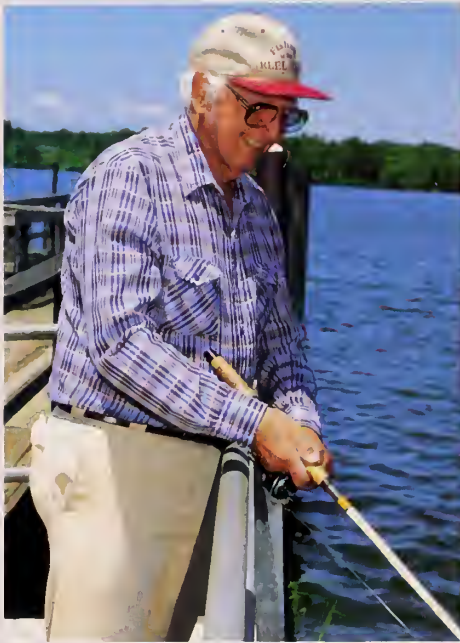
It was Leesville's day to shine. □

Bill Cochran is host of a popular outdoor Web site: www.billcochran.com.



Public Lakes of Northern Virginia

Enjoy the great outdoors among the many public lakes of Northern Virginia.



©Dwight Dyke

Pier fishing on Lake Orange, located in Orange County.

*From the suburbs
of Washington, DC,
to the foothills of
the Blue Ridge
Mountains,
opportunities
abound for
the angler.*

In the expanding population centers and open countryside of Northern Virginia, opportunities still abound for angling enthusiasts to enjoy their sport. At least 25 lakes throughout this area of the state can truly be classified as public lakes, and they provide a fishing resource

that has virtually few or no limitations. From striped bass, pike, and catfish, to the always favorite large-mouth bass and trout, the variety of freshwater fish is diverse and abundant. Size of water is also wide ranging, from the large reservoirs of Lake Anna (9600 acres) and Occoquan (2100 acres) to small ponds, such as Phelps at 3 acres, that lies nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

On the following pages, public lakes for this area of Virginia are listed with fish species and services available. The maps also provide directions. If you have already enjoyed fishing trips to one or several of these lakes, take the time to visit a new site and enjoy a new experience. Come, enjoy the bounty of Northern Virginia.



©Dwight Dyke

Bank fishing on Mountain Run Lake, in Culpepper County, is a great way to spend a relaxing day.



©Dwight Dyke

Walleye, like this one caught in Lake Orange, are just one of the many fish species that anglers can expect to catch in Virginia's public lakes.



Pier fishing on Germantown Lake, in Fauquier County.



Public Lakes of Northern Virginia

Northern Virginia

Lake, Size & Location	Permit Req.	Boat Ramp	Picnic Facil.	Gas Motor	Boat Rental	Handi Facil.	Conces. Facil.	LMB BG	SMB	CF	CRP	SB	TR	NP MY	WE
Abel (185 ac) Rt. 17 N - 616 N - 651E		•						•		•	•				•
Accotink (90 ac) FCPA, I-95N - 644W-right on Backlick, left on Highland, right on Accotink.			•		•	•	•	•		•					
Lake Anna State Park (9,600 ac) Rt. I south, west on Rt. 208 to lake.		•	•	•		•		•		•	•	•			•
Beaverdam Cr. (350 ac) 15 N - 50W - 659N		PR						•	•	•	•				
Brittle (77 ac) 29N - 600E - 793 S		•	•		•	FP	•	•		•	•				•
Burke (218 ac) in Burke Park. 95N - 123N		•	•		•	FP	•	•		•	•			MY	•
Cook (4 ac) Cameron Run Reg. Pk (Alexandria)													•		
Curtis (91 ac) 17N - 616N - 662W, surrounded by park.		•	•		•	FP		•		•	•				
Fairfax Lake (28 ac) 7W - 606W - FCPA surrounded by park.			•		•			•		•	•				
Germantown Lake: (109 ac) Rt. 17 to 28 N, 643 (Meetze Road) to C.M. Crocklett Park	•	•	•		•	FP	•	•		•	•				
Goose Creek (140 ac) 15N - 30W - 659N		PR						•	•	•	•				
Huntsman (27 ac) 123N - 636N - 641N								•		•	•				
Lake Anna State Park Pond: (1 ac) Rt. I to Fredericksburg west on 208, north on 601 to Lake Anna State Park			•			•	•	•		•					
Locust Shade (8 ac) Locust Shade Park. Paddle boats available.			•			•	•	•		•	•		•		
Lunga Reservoir (670 ac) I-95 (exit #148) to USMC Truck Road and follow signs to lake.	•	•		9.9 HP MAX			•	•		•	•				•
Manassas (800 ac) 29N - 215E - 604N		•			•		•	•	•	•	•				•
Motts (160 ac) 95N - 3W - 639N - 618W.	•	•	•		•			•		•	•			NP	•
Mtn. Run (75 ac) 29S - 718W - 719N	•	•	•					•		•	•				
Ni Reservoir (411 ac) 95N - 3W - 620S - 627S	•	•	•		•			•		•	•				•
Occoquan (2,100 ac) two parks off 123N Fountainhead Park Pr. William Park		•	•	9.9 HP MAX	•	•	•	•		•	•				•
Orange (124 ac) Game Department, off Rt. 629 two miles east of Orange on Rt. 20 S - 629S		•	•		•	FP	•	•		•	•				•
Pelham (255 ac) 29S - 718N.	•	•						•		•	•				
Phelps Pond (3 ac) Rt. 17N - Rt. 651 (Phelps WMA)								•		•					
Royal (35 ac) 123N - R Zion Rd. - Rt. 20 S - 629S - R Commonwealth Blvd. - R Gainsborough Dr.		•	•					•		•	•				
Thompson (10 ac) I-66W - 688N G.R. Thompson WMA								BG	•	•			•		

Key

NF - National Forest Stamp
PR - Primitive Ramp

LMB/BG - Largemouth Bass/Bluegill
SMB - Striped Bass
CF - Catfish

Fee - Fee available at Reservoir
FP - Fishing Pier

CRP - Crappie
SB - Striped Bass
TR - Trout
MY - Muskellunge
NP - Northern Pike
WE - Walleye



For more information contact:
VDGIF
1320 Belman Road
Fredericksburg, VA 22401
540/899-4169
www.dgif.state.va.us

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

Continued from page 16

"That bait lay out there about 20 to 25 minutes, then started moving off real slowly," he said.

When he set the hook the fish headed toward the middle of the lake, stripping gobs of line as it knifed through the water.

"It peeled every bit of line off the reel down to the knot—twice. Why the line didn't break, I don't know."

An accomplished angler, Kirk gained line on the fish as his companions chased it with the bow-mounted trolling motor on his bass boat.

"I told them I'd never seen anything like it."

Nor had anyone else. It was the first reported landlocked striper to break the 40-pound mark.

40 pounds, 11 ounces

March, 1987

Smith Mountain Lake

Billy Joe Bell, Altavista, Va.

Billy Joe Bell and David Ware were trolling four rods at the mouth of Craddock Creek, a major tributary flowing into the lower end of Smith Mountain Lake. Bell had broken one of his stout trolling rods and had substituted a lightweight spinning rod and reel bearing 10-pound line. Bell had joked that it probably would be the rig that a big fish would hit. It was.

The striper gobbled up Bell's Bagley Bass' N Shad plug and began zinging line from the reel. Bell watched with concern as the black spoon on his Shimano began to show.

"I was about ready to fire up the boat and follow him," Bell said. Then the fish stopped and suspended immediately under the boat. "He must have been 100 feet down. He was straight under the boat."

In time, Bell began to gain line. The fish was unceremoniously put on a stringer and tossed over the side of the boat while Bell and Ware continued to fish for more than two hours. Jumbo-size stripers aren't that rare in Smith Mountain.

"I had no idea it was a record," said Bell.

It proved to be, by a single ounce.



Joe Harris (left) with guide Spike Franceschini.

42 pounds, 6 ounces

May, 1988

Smith Mountain Lake

Joe Harris, Franklin, N.C.

On their first trip to Smith Mountain Lake, Joe Harris and a buddy, Larry Pearce, had left the dock with guide Spike Franceschini at 5:30 a.m. By 10:00 a.m., only a largemouth had been landed, so Franceschini headed for a honey hole, near Buoy 47 on the upper Roanoke River arm of the lake. He recently had taken three citation-size stripers at the spot. The guide was using a controlled drift, working the river channel side of a point, with gizzard shad baits at two levels. The striper sucked in the deep bait in 20-feet of water.

"He hit the shad in passing and just screamed the reel," said Franceschini. "He just ran and ran and never stopped. Right away, that told me he was a huge fish."

With Harris hanging onto the rod, Franceschini quickly fired up the boat's big engine and raced after the fish.

"Just keep the rod tip up. Keep the pressure on him. We've got this fish," Franceschini told Harris. With his arms tiring, Harris wasn't as confident. Franceschini prepared his client for what would happen next, by telling him not to get excited when the biggest fish he'd ever seen in his life rolled to the surface.

Harris kept his cool while Franceschini broke the handle on his landing net.

44 pounds, 14 ounces

July, 1992

Smith Mountain Lake

Gary Tomlin, Buena Vista, Va.

Most record striped bass are taken December through May, when the females are carrying a heavy cargo of eggs, which can add several pounds to their weight. Gary Tomlin's record was an exception, and you wonder how much more the July catch might have weighed in April.

That thought wasn't something that Tomlin stewed about when he landed his fish. He was more concerned about giving his fishing partner, Buddy Rasnake, proper credit.

"This was a two-man thing," he said. "I was on another man's boat—Buddy's. If it hadn't been for him, we'd never have gotten the fish netted."

Tomlin and Rasnake were trolling with beefy saltwater outfits at Christmas Tree Island on the Blackwater River side of Smith Mountain Lake. The fish hit a Sutton spoon.

"I thought we had hung a tree," said Tomlin. "I reared back on the rod and reeled in line, then I let the pole go back forward and the second time I reared back on it I could feel it fighting on the end."

When Tomlin saw the striper come to the top, he exclaimed, "My God! What a fish!" He had been hoping for something big enough to earn his first citation. This one would do that and then some.

photos right and background ©Dwight Dyke



Top: Michael Rogers. Above: Keith Burgess.



45 pounds, 10 ounces
February, 1995
Smith Mountain Lake
Michael Rogers, Thomsville, N.C.

Who could blame Michael Rogers and his fishing partner, Jerry Kirkman, if they called it quits. They had been fishing Smith Mountain Lake since morning and now darkness was settling in. They hadn't had a strike. Ahead of them was a long drive back to their homes in North Carolina.

"Jerry decided to hit this one last place," said Rogers.

The anglers maneuvered their bass boat into Kilowatt Creek, on the upper Blackwater River arm of Smith Mountain. They dropped three trolling lines where muddy and clear water met. Then they started slow-trolling live shad, moving their baits along the shoreline, headed toward the lake's main channel and home.

Rogers had a 6-inch shad on his line behind a side planer that was keeping the bait about 10 feet deep. When the shad crossed a point near a

dock, Rogers' rod bowed.

"I figured I might have hung into something," he said. Then the planer flipped to the surface and 20-pound line started flowing from the reel. The fish headed for deep water with the kind of arm-wrenching power that had attracted Rogers to the species.

"The power of these fish, the ocean instincts that they have. They are just eating machines. If they had teeth they would be dangerous," he said.

49 pounds, 4 ounces
April, 1999
Smith Mountain Lake
Keith Burgess, Stokedale, N.C.

Keith Burgess already had enjoyed a great week. He and his family were camped on Smith Mountain Lake, enjoying an Easter holiday fishing trip. His dad had landed an 18-pound striper; his uncle, a 14-pounder.

About mid-morning on a Satur-

day, Burgess loaded his wife, Joanne, his 11-year-old daughter, Gina, his 9-year-old son, Bobby, and his dog, Princes, into his boat. They headed up the Blackwater River arm of the lake, where two days earlier a friend, Larry Barber, had landed a 39-pound, 10-ounce striper.

Burgess began drifting large, shad baits in shallow water with his trolling motor working about 10 feet off the banks along major points. A bait on a rod with a large, bright red float suddenly drew the attention of a striper. The fish rolled onto it once, twice, three times. Burgess and his family watched in awe.

When Burgess set the hook, the fish began towing the boat, the family, and the dog into deep water. It stayed near the surface, as if expressing little fear for its foe. Burgess asked Gina to net it.

"I've taught her," he said with confidence. Was she nervous?

"Not really," she said, as if wondering what the fuss was all about.



Bats at Their Best

by Carol Heiser and Sally Mills
illustrations by Spike Knuth

Let's face it: bats get a bad rap. Their unusual looks and nocturnal habits cause many people to fear bats or portray them as evil. But the truth is, humans would have a hard time getting by without them. Close to 1,000 species of bats live on virtually every continent of the globe but Antarctica. They play a critical role in the earth's ecosystems, performing such important duties as pollinating the planet's greenery, dispersing seeds to new locations, and feeding on huge quantities of insects.

and are likely to be found in tropical regions of the world.

Biologists separate Virginia bat species into two broad categories: cave dwellers and tree dwellers. The little brown bat is considered a cave dweller, which means it spends the winter hibernating in caves or man-made dwellings. Other cave bats include big browns, Indianas, and pipistrelles. Red bats, in contrast, are more solitary mammals that rest in trees. As with other tree-dwelling species, red bats are more apt to migrate during winter. They will hibernate in sheltered places in the forest—in a tree crevice or even under a rock on the ground.

Virginia Bats

Virginia forests benefit, too, from the 16 species of bats that live here most or all of the year. Of these, the little brown and the red bat are most common. All

Virginia bats are classified as *microbats*, a scientific distinction meaning they

are smaller and rely mainly upon their ears to find food.

Megabats, on the other hand, are generally larger and have keen

eyesight. These fruit-eating bats are less prone to hibernate

Virginia's bat species have distinct life histories, but they all share a common diet: insects! Using a technique called *echolocation*, a bat opens its mouth and "screams" high-frequency (ultrasonic) sounds that bounce off objects and create "echos." The bat is able to locate an insect by pinpointing the source of its particular echo.

Flying With Their Hands

Bat hands resemble human hands with a thumb and four fingers, but are much

Bat ears are highly sensitive to sound. Different species have various shapes and sizes. Above: Evening bat (Nycticeius humeralis).



Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*)





larger in proportion to their body. Long, skinny bones form the structure of a large webbed wing, which explains why the scientific group name for bats is *Chiroptera*, meaning "hand-wing." Strong toes enable bats to cling to a variety of surfaces and rest while hanging upside down.

The Next Generation

Fall generally means mating season for bats, followed by migration (short or long distance) to winter caves to hibernate. During this time bats have just enough energy stored to make it through the season, with perhaps one or two awakenings during warm spells. They may run out of fat reserves and die if awakened too many times, and they need our protection during this vulnerable period.

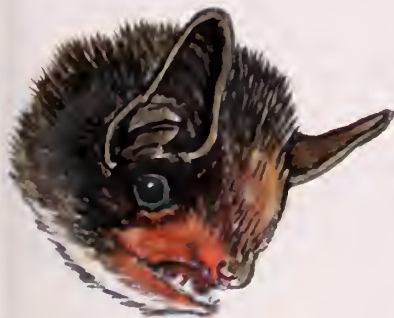
Young "pups" are usually born in the spring, between May and July. Females and their young spend the summer months in a nursery *colony*. Most of our cave bats do not raise their young in a cave but instead raise them in the woods, in tree cavities, under loose bark, or sometimes in houses!

Folklore

From the native peoples of North America to the Orient, bats are represented in many a tale. In China, bats are a symbol of happiness and appear as a common motif in fabrics and decorative arts. The Chinese word for bat—"fu"—is pronounced the same as the word for happiness. Here in the U.S., some farmers view bats as reliable weather forecasters. When bats are flying close to the ground, for instance, they are said to signal an approaching storm. Bats' extremely large, sensitive ears pick up and respond to changes in air pressure.

Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat
(*Corynorhinus rafinesquii*)

Their consumption of large amounts of insects, like moths and mosquitoes, is just one of the many benefits of having bats in your area.



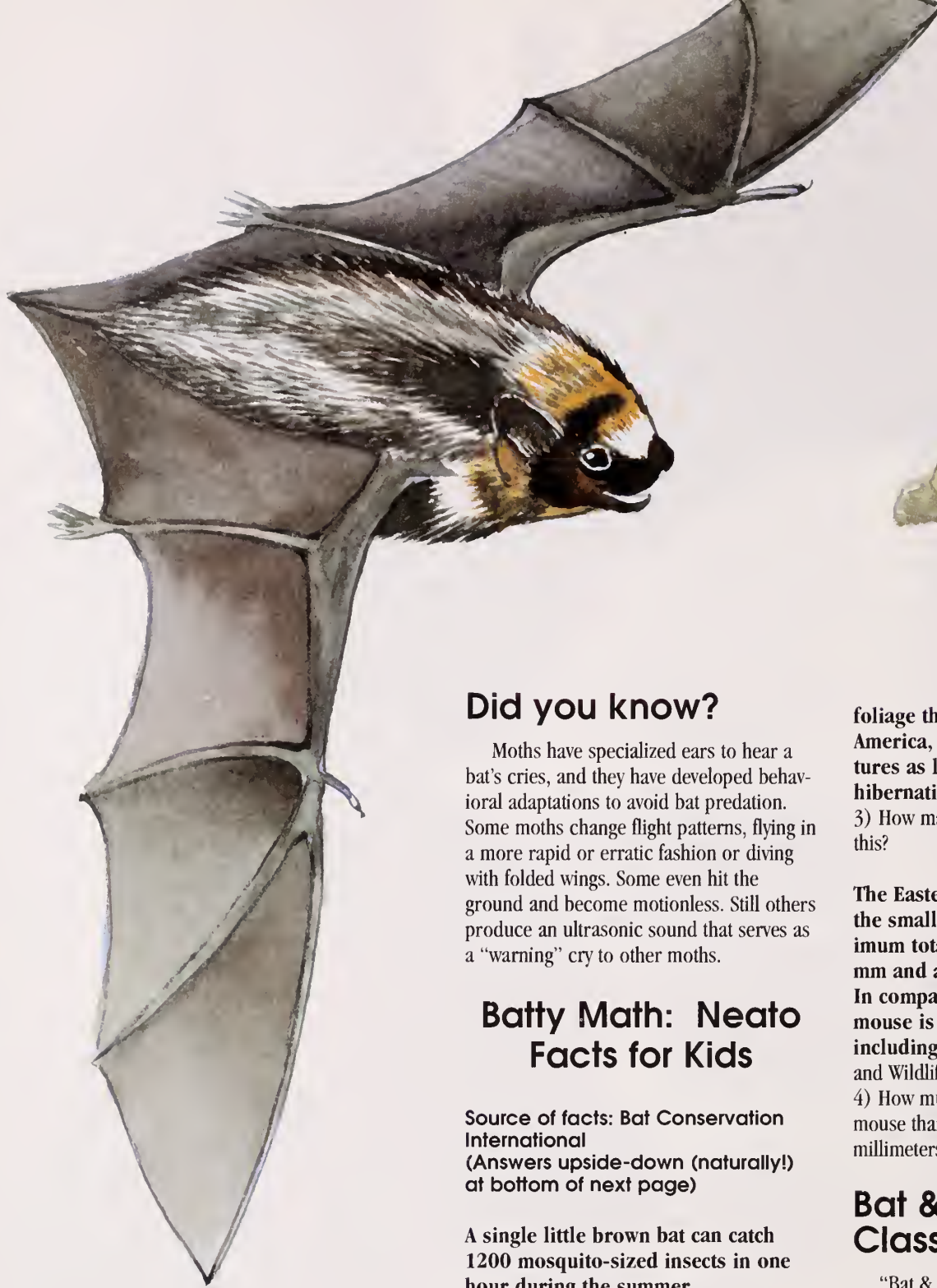
Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis*)



Big Free-tailed Bat (*Nyctinomops macrotis*)



Spotted Bat (*Euderma maculatum*)



Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*)



Did you know?

Moths have specialized ears to hear a bat's cries, and they have developed behavioral adaptations to avoid bat predation. Some moths change flight patterns, flying in a more rapid or erratic fashion or diving with folded wings. Some even hit the ground and become motionless. Still others produce an ultrasonic sound that serves as a "warning" cry to other moths.

Batty Math: Neato Facts for Kids

Source of facts: Bat Conservation International
(Answers upside-down (naturally!) at bottom of next page)

A single little brown bat can catch 1200 mosquito-sized insects in one hour during the summer.

- 1) If this bat goes out to hunt at 9:00 p.m. and stops feeding at 5:00 a.m., how many insects could it eat during that night?
- 2) How many little brown bats would it take to eat one million insects in the same period of time?

Eastern red bats, which live in tree

foliage throughout most of North America, can withstand body temperatures as low as 23°F during winter hibernation.

- 3) How many degrees *below freezing* is this?

The Eastern pipistrelle bat is one of the smallest eastern bats, with a maximum total length (nose to tail) of 95 mm and a wingspan of 208-258 mm. In comparison, an average house mouse is 160 mm in total length, including its tail (source: VDGIF's Fish and Wildlife Information System).

- 4) How much *longer* is the average house mouse than the average pipistrelle bat, in millimeters? in inches?

Bat & Moth: a Classic Activity

"Bat & Moth" is a simple activity from Joseph Cornell's landmark pocket-guide to nature awareness, called *Sharing Nature with Children* (c. 1979, Dawn Publications, Nevada City, CA 95959). The activity illustrates how a bat captures its prey and is suitable for ages five and up, with six or more players. The group forms a circle 10-15 feet across; one member is blind-



Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*)

folded as the bat in the center of the circle, with another member joining him as moth. The "bat" tries to tag the "moth," while the group ensures that the two stay within their circle. To do this, the bat must call out "bat!", and the moth must immediately call out "moth!", to simulate the echo bouncing back. The bat repeats calling out (and the moth continues to echo back) until the bat has "tracked down" (tagged) the moth.

Bat-Proofing Your Home

Bats look for a home of their own in different places. Some species, such as the red bat and the hoary bat, do not generally cause problems for people because these bats are fairly solitary and prefer to roost in trees. Other species, such as the little brown bat, the big brown bat, and the eastern pipistrelle are colonial, which means that they congregate in natural cavities, such as caves, large crevices in rocky outcrops, or tree cavities. In suburban areas, this need for cavities during the breeding season often translates into the attics of buildings! To discourage bats from getting into your home, garage or other outbuild-

ing, and to give bats more suitable roosting areas, there are some simple steps you can take now before bat colonies establish themselves this spring.

Step 1: Seal up all openings on the outside of your home. Any hole or crack more than a half-inch in diameter should be closed. Inspect all areas over windows and doors, around vents, and under eaves and shingles; repair as needed. Use a piece of half-inch mesh hardware cloth over the top of the chimney or a tighter fitting screen door. Put a screen covering over air intakes; stuff gaps between pipes and walls with steel wool.

Step 2: Install a bat house on a tree in your yard. Bat houses may be purchased at a local garden/nature supply store, or you can construct an inexpensive bat box yourself. Look for bat box plans in woodworking or wildlife books, or contact Bat Conservation International (see below).

If you discover that bats have already entered your home and have established a roosting colony, check the Web site at Bat Conservation International (BCI) about a remedy for the situation (see phone and web information in Teaching Tools section, below). The book *America's Neighborhood Bats* by Merlin Tuttle (c. 1988 BCI) also contains helpful tips for preventing bats in the home.

Bats emit crying sounds that help them to locate insects to feed on.

Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat (*Corynorhinus rafinesquii*)

Teaching Tools

The following two resources are from Bat Conservation International; call 1-800-538-BATS, or visit their web site at www.bat-con.org/ for educational articles, slides, and additional information:

Discover Bats!, c. 2000, an educational package for teachers of grades 4–8. Contains a handbook of 21 lessons with background information, student pages and appendices, as well as a companion 47-minute video divided into four segments for ease of instruction.



1) 9:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. is eight hours. Therefore, 8 hours x 1200 insects per hour = 9,600 insects
2) 1,000,000 insects ÷ 9,600 insects per bat = approx. 104 bats
3) 32°F freezing – 23°F = 9°F
4) The house mouse is 160 mm – 95 mm = 65 mm longer than a pipistrelle, or 65 mm ÷ (2.54 cm per inch x 100 mm per centimeter) = .26 inches, which is only about a quarter of an inch larger.

ANSWERS



Grey Bat (*Myotis grisescens*)

Virginia Naturally

All bats need a respite from humans! It is a myth that bats will deliberately try to bite people. They are very shy creatures, but if you find one injured or on the ground, do not pick it up. Like any wild mammal, a bat may bite if disturbed and could be carrying rabies.

The Educator's Activity Book About Bats, c. 1991, 62 pages. Eighteen activities for teachers of grades K-5 (\$11.95). Sample lessons available from Web site.

Additional resources; check with the publisher or your local bookstore for availability:

Bats Incredible!, AIMS Activities for teachers of grades 2-4. AIMS Education Foundation, P. O. Box 8120, Fresno, CA 93747-8120. 1-888-733-2467, Web site www.AIMSedu.org (\$16.95).

Bats: Complete Cross-Curricular Theme Unit, by Robin Bernard, c. 1998, Scholastic, Inc (32 pages). 212-343-6100, Web site www.scholastic.com Activities for teachers of grades 1-3; contains poster, lessons, and student pages.

Bats: Swift Shadows in the Twilight, by Ann C. Cooper, c. 1994; "The Wonder Series" of books,

Denver Museum of Natural History & Roberts Rhinehart Publishers, Boulder, CO 80301, 900-388-1000, 64 pages (\$7.95). Nine activities in "workbook" style for readers aged 8-12, with stories.

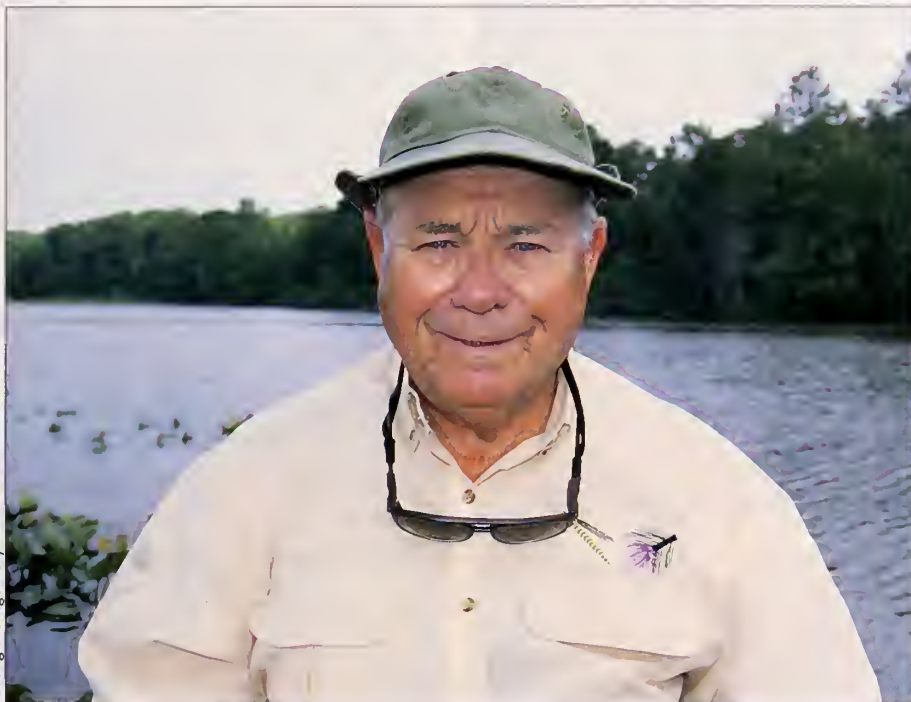
Sally Mills is an outdoor writer and editor for Virginia Sea Grant at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science. Carol Heiser is a Wildlife Education Specialist and coordinates the WILD School Sites program at the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.



Northern Long-eared Bat
(*Myotis septentrionalis*)



Journal



©King Montgomery

Capital Sport Fishing, Travel & Outdoor Show and The Old Dominion Fly Fishing Show

by King Montgomery

Lefty Kreh heads an all-star cast of guest celebrities at the Old Dominion Fly Fishing Show, February 16-18, 2001, at the Capital Expo Center in Chantilly, Va. The third annual show has joined the popular Capital Sport Fishing, Travel & Outdoor Show, which has a lineup of hundreds of fishing, hunting, and other outdoor recreation retailers, guides/outfitters, lodges, and conservation organizations, with over 100 fly fishing exhibition booths. This show is one-stop-shopping for all your outdoor needs including 2001 fishing licenses

and stamps from the VDGIF booth.

Lefty Kreh and Ed Jaworowski will give fly casting demonstrations and present slide seminars. Bob Clouser and C. Boyd Pfeiffer will do fly tying demonstrations and seminars. Harry Murray, Harry Robertson, Phil Gay, Joe Bruce, Gary DuBiel, Jack Dennis, and I will give informative slide shows on various aspects of fly angling.

The Old Dominion Fly Fishing Show is from 1:00-9:30 p.m. on Friday, 10:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. on Saturday, and 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. on Sunday. Admission is \$8 for adults, \$3 for children, and kids under 5 years are admitted free. Admission fees cover both shows. Parking is ample and free. Food and beverages will be available.

Address Correction

Due to mailing complications, the address listed for the Region 4 VDGIF, Verona office, in the January 2001 issue of *Virginia Wildlife* magazine (2001 Trout Guide) has been changed to VDGIF, 127 Lee Highway, P.O. Box 996, Verona, VA 24482. **It is important that the post office box number be included when mailing to this address.** □

Left: Fly fishing expert and outdoor writer Lefty Kreh.

For more information, call Beau Beasley at (703) 793-1159, e-mail fishutopia@cox.rr.com, or see the Web site at www.sportshows.com and follow the link to the Old Dominion Fly Fishing Show. □

Bat Poster

"Bats of the Eastern United States"—is a full-color poster that is available from the Nongame Program of the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries, with your donation of not less than \$10. To order, make check payable to Treasurer of Virginia, and mail to: Attention Ray Fernald, Nongame Program, VDGIF, 4010 W. Broad St., Richmond, VA 23230-1104.

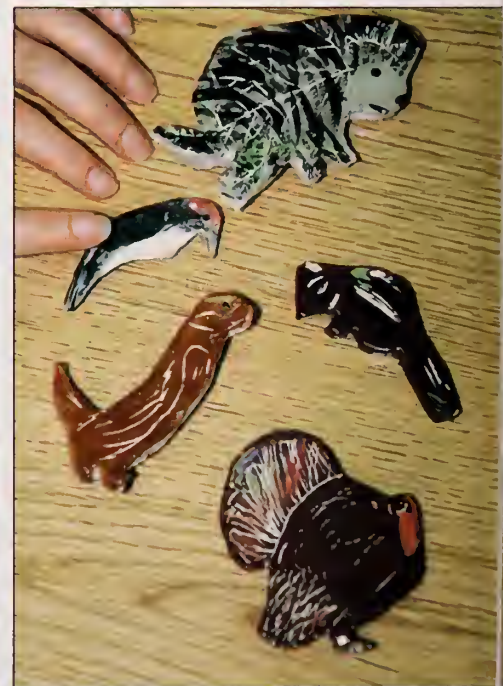


Virginia Wildlife Figures

story & photos
by King Montgomery

Bailey's Elementary in Falls Church is not your average school, and nothing like what most of us attended during our very formative years. Bailey's Elementary School for the Arts and Sciences (part of the Fairfax County Public Schools system) offers its diverse student body a unique educational experience that includes interactively learning real-life skills, exploring avenues where personal expression is developed and encouraged, and becoming aware of the marvelous differences between many cultures.

Bailey's, a magnet school, is one of the most culturally diverse schools in Fairfax County, comprised of almost a thousand stu-



dents from over 45 countries who speak 20 different languages. Bailey's program emphasizes the use of technology and learning-by-doing methodologies. Learning-by-doing is what Mrs. Allyn Kurin's fourth grade class did last year, and *Virginia Wildlife* magazine played a major role.

Mrs. Kurin's class, inspired by animal drawings and photos in *Virginia Wildlife*, had a project: forming a class business making clay animal figures that can be either pins or magnets. The figures were sold in the school museum's "gift shop." The museum was established and run by the students. (I bought the first magnet, a fine river otter.)

The class did extensive market research by canvassing fellow students to determine optimum size of the figures, whether magnets and/or pins were desired, and the price they were willing to pay. Then the students organized into a business structure with financial, graphics, public relations, sales, and other departments. They designed a logo and issued stock certificates. All of students worked on the figures and the business from start to finish.

I visited the class as the stock of wildlife figures was being packaged for sale. Rows of otters, wild turkeys, woodpeckers, porcupines, and skunks were everywhere. Copies of *Virginia Wildlife* were abundant, and I could see the children enjoyed reading them, as well as learning about the natural wonders and outdoor recreation that the Old Dominion offers. They also enjoyed the whole experience and had fun doing it. And so did I. □

As part of a class project and inspired by drawings and photographs found in Virginia Wildlife magazine, students from Bailey's Elementary School formed a class business which featured clay animals made into pins and magnets.



Answers to the December 2000 "Byrd's Nest" Crossword Puzzle

S	W	A	L	L	O	W	T	A	I	L		O	P	E
M	O	L	E		C	A	E	N		Y	O	K	E	D
O	L	E	O		E	P	A		E	N	R	A	G	E
O	F		P	O	L	I	C	E		X	I		A	N
T			O	R	O	T	U	N	D		O	A	S	
H	E	A	L		T	T	P	S			L	S	U	
H		N	D	S				S	U	B	S	E	T	S
O	L	D		P		A		R	O	E		R		D
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On The Water

by Jim Crosby, Region 4 Boater Education Coordinator

The United States Power Squadron

The United States has two premiere boating safety organizations operated by a volunteer membership—the U.S. Power Squadrons and the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. In this column, I will focus on the U.S. Power Squadrons.

On February 2, 1914, in a conference committee meeting held at the New York Yacht Club, the final work of organizing and launching the United States Power Squadrons (USPS) was accomplished. The organization was incorporated on February 19, 1915.

The original thrust of leadership came from the Boston and New York Yacht Clubs at a time when power yachts were gaining in popularity.

In 1982, a special meeting of delegates approved changes in the constitution and bylaws eliminating a male-only membership rule, thereby permitting women to become active members.

The basic unit of organization is the squadron and the roster of seven squadrons in 1914 has now grown to well over 450 units, operating in the continental United States, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Japan. A parallel organization, Canadian Power and Sail Squadrons, flourishes in Canada.

Today, the USPS is a private, self-

supporting, non-profit, fraternal boating organization with a commendable record of achievement. It boasts a dedicated and productive membership of some 60,000 boaters who give generously of their time and resources to educate others in all aspects of boating, and to promoting the cause of safe boating through public courses and other civic services.

The squadrons contribute to their communities by promoting safe boating on the water and in the classroom. Experienced instructors teach courses on Seamanship, Piloting and Position Finding, Celestial Navigation, Marine Electronics, Weather, Sailing, Engine Maintenance, Cruise Planning, and more.

More than 20 self-study and video courses are available on a variety of subjects, such as GPS, Radar, Oceanography, Boat Insurance, and Navigational Astronomy. Successfully completing a USPS Boating Course meets the educational requirements for boat operation in all states and usually results in discounts on most boat insurance policies.

USPS members enjoy a special friendship and camaraderie on and off the water with fellow members who are skilled in boating. On-the-water activities include: cruises, ren-

dezvous, sail races, navigation contests, fishing derbies, rafting, and predicted log contests. Activities ashore include: marine programs, parties, dinner dances, picnics, and educational programs.

The USPS monitors legislation in the U.S. Congress and state legislatures to protect and enhance the rights and desires of the recreational boater.

USPS members help the National Ocean Service keep nautical charts accurate and save taxpayers millions of dollars each year by reporting chart corrections. The USPS has been honored by three U.S. presidents for its civic contributions and for educating more than 4 million boaters in the last half-century.

To join, you must successfully complete a boating safety course taught by a local squadron or the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and be sponsored by a squadron member.

For information about membership, courses, or questions about their programs, they invite you to use their toll-free number 888-367-8777. You are also invited to visit their Web site at www.usps.org. □

For questions or comments, you can reach the author through the Department or via e-mail: jimecrosby@aol.com

RECIPES

by Joan Cone

Use Your Crockpot for Wild Rabbit

Wild rabbit is delicious and nutritious. Its nutritive value exceeds that of beef. A half cup of rabbit provides 21 grams of protein and 129 calories. An equal amount of beef offers 16.5 grams of protein and 323 calories.

Unlike domestic rabbit, sold in some supermarkets, wild rabbits are tough. This means you should use a steam cooking method which will tenderize the meat and keep it moist. The crockpot creates a perfect rabbit entree!

Menu

Rabbit In Crockpot

German Potato Pancakes

Brussels Sprouts

Cranberry Coffee Cake

Rabbit in Crockpot

1 or 2 rabbits, cut into serving pieces
Salt and pepper to taste
3 to 4 tablespoons shortening
1 large sweet onion, sliced
1 tablespoon flour
1 cup apple cider
1/4 cup raisins

Dry rabbit pieces thoroughly and season with salt and pepper. Heat shortening in a large skillet and fry onion until lightly browned. Transfer to crockpot. Brown rabbit pieces on all sides and add to crockpot. Drain all but 1 tablespoon of shortening in skillet; stir in flour and cook for a minute. Add cider and raisins and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Then pour sauce over rabbit, cover and cook on LOW heat for 8-9 hours. If necessary, thicken liquid in crockpot with equal amounts of

cornstarch and water. One rabbit will serve 3.

German Potato Pancakes

2 large eggs
1 small onion, chopped
1 teaspoon baking powder
Salt and pepper to taste
1 1/2 pounds russet potatoes, peeled and cubed
1/4 cup flour

Sour cream

Process first 4 ingredients in a processor or blender until smooth. Gradually add cubed potatoes and flour, processing until mixture thickens. Pour about 1/4 cup batter for each pancake onto a hot, lightly greased nonstick skillet; cook over medium-high heat for 1 1/2 minutes on each side or until browned. Dollop with sour cream. Makes 12 (3-inch) pancakes

Brussel Sprouts

1 1/4 pounds fresh brussels sprouts
2 cups water
1 can (8 ounces) sliced water chestnuts, drained
1 can (10 3/4 ounces) cream of mushroom soup, undiluted
1/4 cup milk
1 cup (4 ounces) shredded Cheddar cheese
Salt and pepper to taste
1/2 cup slivered almonds, toasted

Wash brussels sprouts and remove discolored leaves. Cut off stem ends and slash bottom of each sprout with a shallow X. Place brussels sprouts and water in a saucepan. Cook over medium-high heat until mixture comes to a boil.

Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 8 to 10 minutes or until tender. Drain and keep warm. Place sprouts in a lightly greased 1 1/2-quart casserole and layer water chestnuts over sprouts. Combine soup and next 3 ingredients in a saucepan. Cook over medium-high heat until cheese melts, stirring occasionally. Pour soup mixture over sprouts and water chestnuts. Sprinkle with almonds. Makes 6 servings.

Cranberry Coffee Cake

1/2 cup butter or margarine, softened
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
2 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 carton (8 ounces) sour cream
1 teaspoon almond extract
1 can (16 ounces) whole-berry cranberry sauce
1/2 cup chopped pecans

Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating thoroughly after each addition. Combine flour, baking powder, soda, and salt. Add to creamed mixture alternately with sour cream, beating well after each addition. Add flavoring and mix well. Spoon 1/3 of mixture into a greased and floured 10-inch tube pan. Spoon 1/3 of cranberry sauce over batter. Repeat layers twice more, ending with cranberry sauce. Sprinkle pecans over top. Bake in a preheated 350° F. oven for 1 hour or until cake tests done. Let cool 5 minutes before removing from pan. Makes 16 to 20 servings. □

Wild Backyard

story and photos by Marlene A. Condon



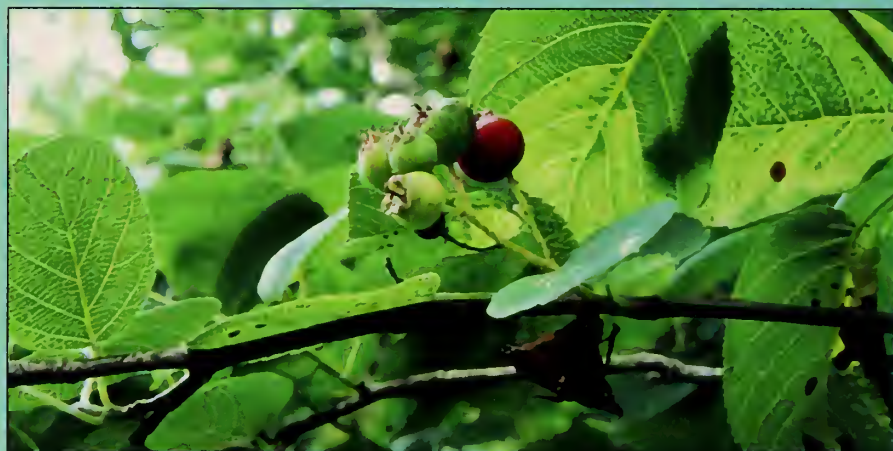
Serviceberry

If you want to attract birds, shadow serviceberry (*Amelanchier canadensis*), or Allegheny serviceberry (*Amelanchier laevis*), are wonderful small native trees (although they can be more like shrubs) to grow in a sunny or partly shaded spot in your yard. These multi-trunked trees make berries that are irresistible to many species of feathered visitors. Although the berries are ripe when they turn red, they continue to lure in birds as they change color to very dark purple or blue before falling off the tree.

The globular fruit ripens in late spring (mid-June in Virginia). I have seen my serviceberry teeming with American goldfinches, and I have watched adult tufted titmice feed their newly-fledge young the red, as well as blue berries. Although I do not see them often because of their secretive ways, I see brown thrashers every day when there is fruit on the serviceberry. I have also seen blue jays, Carolina chickadees, northern cardinals, and cedar waxwings partaking of these berries.

Birds are not the only ones that make use of serviceberry trees. White-tailed deer sometimes eat the young twigs and leaves, and gray squirrels, eastern chipmunks, and even humans, enjoy serviceberry fruit (the juicy berries are good in pies and muffins if you can beat the other animals to them!).


There are many cultivated varieties and species of serviceberry,



most of which make tasty fruits. However, a few do not. To be safe, request the two that I have mentioned when you visit your local nursery or order from a nursery catalog.

While serviceberry is not a particularly attractive tree to look at, it is delightful to have in the yard as a harbinger of spring. Being one of the earliest trees to bloom, with its white

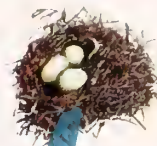
blossoms appearing well before leaf emergence, serviceberry lets you know that warmer weather is at hand.

Serviceberry transplants easily in early spring. Flowering when young, the serviceberry will provide fruits before long, and birds and small mammals will appear quickly thereafter. A black bear might even thank you with its presence! 



story and illustration
by Spike Knuth

Naturally Wild



Red-bellied Woodpecker

Melanerpes carolinus

The names of some birds can be confusing. For example, the red-bellied woodpecker, a common woodpecker of Virginia, doesn't have much of a red belly. It merely has a wash of crimson on the lower part of its smoky-gray belly. The name has probably stuck because in the 1730s, Catesby named it "*picus ventre rubro*," or, "woodpecker with a red abdomen."

It is often mistaken for the red-headed woodpecker, but it has red only across the top of its head to the nape of its neck, while the red-headed has a full red head, extending hood-like to its breast. The red-bellied's head color is more of a bright red-orange instead of the deeper red of the red-headed woodpecker. The female has red only from the nape to the top of her head. It doesn't extend all the way to her forehead. A better name for the red-bellied woodpecker is one of its local names, "zebra back," because of the black and white horizontal stripes on its back.

The red-bellied woodpecker is anywhere from 9–10½ inches long, shaped and patterned after another common, but brownish woodpecker, the flicker. Like the flicker, the red-bellied frequently feeds on the ground on ants, beetles, nuts, and a variety of wild and domestic fruits. They have not endeared themselves to orange growers in Florida, due to their habit of tapping ripening fruit on the trees as well as sap from the trunks. They will also help themselves to the sap from the holes or sap wells made by the yellow-bellied sapsucker, another common woodpecker.

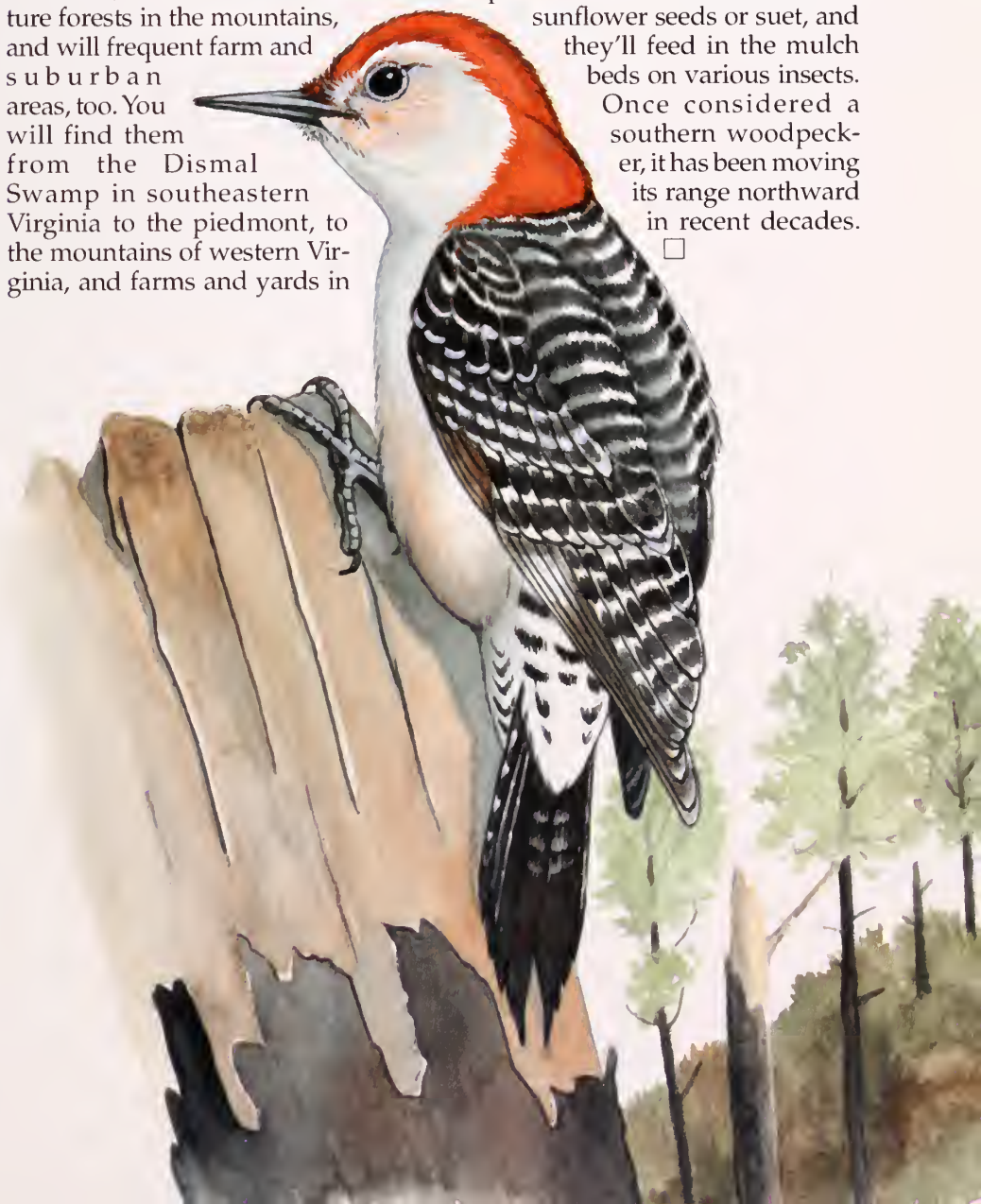
The red-bellied woodpeckers are very vocal and noisy birds, with a variety of scolding calls and harsh notes. They are among those woodpeckers that like to rattle your rain gutters or anything else that resonates in spring. They are cavity nesters, preferring deciduous trees, and seem to favor swamp and bottomlands, but can be found in mature forests in the mountains, and will frequent farm and suburban areas, too. You will find them from the Dismal Swamp in southeastern Virginia to the piedmont, to the mountains of western Virginia, and farms and yards in


between. They lay three to eight eggs, normally four or five, which hatch in about 14 days. Both parent birds take part in the rearing and feeding. In the south, they may have two and sometimes three broods, while in the north they usually have only one.

Look for the red-bellied woodpecker at the feeder. It will take sunflower seeds or suet, and they'll feed in the mulch beds on various insects.

Once considered a southern woodpecker, it has been moving its range northward in recent decades.

□





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When you do this, you are supporting the essential research and management of Virginia's native birds, fish, and other nongame animals that make Virginia's outdoors a unique place.

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